Ban on Import of Toxic Chinese Toys

†764.SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some countries have imposed ban on Chinese toys because of use of toxic substance in them;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken concrete steps to create awareness amongst consumers about buying indigenous goods, and threats of buying foreign goods particularly Chinese goods;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) This information is not maintained in this Department.

(c) to (e) Department of Consumer Affairs has undertaken multi media publicity campaign regarding consumer awareness under which efforts are being made to educate consumers about their rights and grievance redressal mechanism. Specific focus has been given to spread awareness regarding purchase of goods that are based on standardization such as ISI, Agmark, etc.

Price rise of Sugar

765. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that price of sugar is rising during the last one year;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to control it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Due to lower production of sugarcane and sugar in the country during the current sugar season 2008-09, sugar prices in the open market have increased. The Central Government has taken a slew of measures to check the price hike as indicated below:

(i) Stock-holding and turnover limits on sugar have been imposed *vide* Notifications dated 09.03.2009 and 12.03.2009 for a period of four months *i.e.* upto 08.07.2009. The Government has since decided to extend these limits by another six months, *i.e.*, upto 08.01.2010;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(ii) Additional releases of non-levy sugar quota were given during the quarter April-June, 2009;

(iii) Futures trading in sugar on NCDEX has been suspended to check speculative tendencies in sugar trade with effect from 27th May, 2009.

Apart from the above, the Central Government has also taken steps to augment sugar stocks by permitting import of raw sugar by sugar mills, and one million ton of white/refined sugar by designated agencies, at zero customs duty for a specified period under O.G.L. Besides, sugar mills have also been permitted to import raw sugar under Advance Authorization Scheme upto a specified period and sell the processed sugar in domestic market, subject to discharge of export obligation in subsequent period.

Village Grain Banks

766. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Village Grain Banks established in the State of West Bengal, during the last three years, district-wise and year-wise;

(b) the amount sanctioned and released for setting up of above banks in West Bengal in the last three years, year-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that VGB scheme has been revised recently;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) how the Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute is helping in effectively maintaining Grain Banks in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) and (b) 420 Village Grain Banks (VGBs) have been sanctioned by Government and established by State Government of West Bengal during 2006-07 and 2007-08. For this purpose, Rs.283.19 lakh have been released. Details of VGBs established by the State Government and funds released are enclosed as Statement (*See* below).

(c) and (d) Continuation of the Village Grain Bank scheme during Eleventh Plan period was approved in December, 2007 with an outlay of Rs.87 Crores.

(e) Village Grain Banks are managed by Executive Committee of each VGB. It is to ensure proper storage of foodgrains. A one time grant of Rs.6000/- for storage and other expenses is provided for each grain bank. The Indian Grain Storage Management and Research Institute has not been involved in maintenance of VGBs.